# Year 9 – 10 : Post 1975 Migration to Australia

The package found on the Teaching Teachers for the Future (TTF) site contained a lesson model in incorporating ICT in the teaching of a historical subject, in this case post-1975 Migration to Australia. The lesson itself is aimed at a Year 10 audience using the Australian Curriculum as the basis for its lesson outcomes and objectives. The resources provided are quite good and contain sound, reliable information and content that is pitched at a mid-high school level, perfect for Year 10 students.

The sequence of lessons the package is suggesting is based on the research of digital archives and sites on the topic of the post-1975 Migration to Australia and to synthesise and represent this research in the form of an online wiki. The task itself requires students to directly engage and to form good behaviours and methods in the use of online digital content in a critical and historical way.

The lessons and activities are a good example of the ways that ICT can be used to engage students and challenge the way they think about presenting, researching and editing research and information. The use of a wiki is in itself a skill that requires students to undertake a critical approach in separating information based upon sections (headings/subheadings) and understanding the relationships between each different wiki page. The research needed to do this project is also a good way of guiding students towards better online and digital practices and behaviours outside of copy and paste mentality. This will prove essential in developing the research and critical skills needed to navigate through information in both digital and non-digital formats and to question the characteristics of different research sources.

The issues that arise are similar to any considerations of using ICT in the classroom and are mainly about accessibility and differentiation. The main issue with technology is access, and while the incorporation of such lessons and tasks would be great for most teachers, the reality may be very different. A wiki requires a reliable internet connection to access and this may prove difficult for some children to attain. Despite the popular view of internet connectivity, there are still a high number of the population who do not have a reliable internet connection, particularly in lower socio-economic areas, and as such a task that involves completely online access must have some allowance for students who may have difficulties in this aspect. Secondly, in differentiation, the other popular concept is that of students’ ‘inherent’ abilities with computers and digital technology, and as many adults and children alike will attest, there is no such thing as a ‘digital native’. Furthermore, to use a wiki requires the user to understand the fundamentals of using either a rich-text editor or to use the wiki markup language, that may prove even more challenging when they attempt to update or edit their wikis. There must be a very strong focus on ensuring that the ability to perform this task is not jeopardised by the limitations of a students grasp on how to operate the technology, otherwise we must question whether the technology is in fact supportive of the teaching objectives we are trying to achieve. If the task becomes more about learning how to use a technology, then the lesson itself can be lost.

Having said that, the use of ICT in the classroom, and particularly in a history classroom, is one that MUST be undertaken given the range of available content and the digital platform’s characteristics being extremely suited for many of history’s needs.